

Miss Howard Weeden House
Huntsville, Alabama
Mason Co.

HABS No. 16-404

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 16

Historic American Buildings Survey
F. Walter Burkhardt, District Officer
Ala. Polytechnic Inst., Auburn, Ala.

Project #16-404
MISS HOWARD WEEDEN HOME
Gates and Greene Streets
Huntsville, Alabama

HISTORICAL DATA:

Built in 1819.

Architect:

Purchase price of property: \$700.

Cost of Building:

Ownership:

Henry C. Bradford, 1819-1821.

John Read, 1821-1824.

John McKinley, once justice of the United States
Supreme Court, 1824-1829.

Bartley M. Lowe, 1829-1845.

Martha Chambers Betts, 1845.

Dr. William Weeden, 1845. Still in his family.

Present occupant:

R. P. Weeden, the grandson of Dr. William Weeden.

Henry C. Bradford:

Began the construction of the building in 1819.
This house at first consisted of "a brick dwelling
house and kitchen".

Dr. William Weeden:

Moved from Virginia to Madison County in 1832.

Added to and finished this house in 1845.

Large land owner.

Died in 1846.

Harry Weeden:

Son of Dr. William Weeden.

Army surgeon during the Civil War.

John Weeden:

Son of Dr. Weeden.

Colonel in the Confederate forces during the War.

Civil War:

This house was used as headquarters by the Federal
troops occupying Huntsville.

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Miss Howard Weeden:

The Daughter of Dr. William Weeden. Died in 1905. Miss Weeden was both poet and painter.

In an effort to preserve the memory of the old Southern dandy, Miss Weeden wrote about him and painted him. In 1898, she published "Shadows on the Wall", a series of Negro sketches and portraits. Many of her models were ex-slaves of her own family.

Her best poems have been set to music and are, at this time, great favorites of the Southern Negro. The most famous of these are, "Swing Low Sweet Chariot", and "When the Angels Call".

Besides "Shadows on the Wall", she published her poems in three series. These were "Bandanna Ballads", "Songs of the Old South", and "Old Voices".

Joel Chandler Harris, in speaking of her "Bandanna Ballads", wrote, "I am moved to thank heaven for the beautiful genius that has snatched from the poet and has preserved the handful of memories embodied in this book."

And Thomas Nelson Page said: "Miss Weeden can paint a picture as no one else I have ever known. 'Shadows on the Wall' is the work of both artist and poet, both its art and poetry being vital with truthfulness to life."

When speaking of her death in 1905, Ellen Friel Baker said: "When Howard Weeden died at her home in Huntsville, there was lost to art and to letters one who had done more to perpetuate the memory of the South than any other writer."

The Source of Material:

Historic Homes, by Pat Jones, published in the Huntsville Times for September 18, 1932.

Revised 1936, H.C.F.

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ARCHITECTURAL MERIT AND DATA:

The architectural merit of the Miss Howard Weeden Home is not nearly as great as the historical merit, as listed on the previous page. The building is a typical town house, reflecting Virginia colonial design except for the substitution of Greek detail. The building is very well proportioned except for the entrance treatment, which is rather incongruous with the rest of the house design.

The building has been marked by a bronze slab in commemoration of Miss Howard Weeden, the famous Southern poet and painter. It is for this reason, rather than its architectural merit, that it was measured so early in the H.A.B.S. program.

Source of Material:

E. Walter Burkhardt, District Administrator, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama.

Compiled from article by Mr. Pat Jones of the Huntsville Times, issue of September 18, 1932; and Mr. Philip Mewhinney of the measuring force.